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SCORE SOUTHERN STEEL PLANTS;
STEEL INDUSTRY SPURS ECONOMY DRIVE

[Numbers in parentheses refer to the appended list of sources.]

In April, the activity of individual workers and enterprises in making pledges for 1950 was stepped up, as a major industry-wide drive for economy was started. The Ministry of the Metallurgical Industry was subjected to criticism on several counts, chief of which was the first-quarter failure of certain enterprises in the South.

In the first quarter 1950, several southern plants failed to meet the plan. As a result of their directors' negligence, these plants were poorly prepared for winter operations, they did not have adequate intraplant transport, and the supplies of raw materials for blast and open-hearth furnaces were irregular. Bychkov, chief of the Main Administration of the Metallurgical Industry of the South and Center, is inclined to explain the unsatisfactory work of this group of plants by the fact that their directors lost the technique of overcoming the difficult conditions peculiar to winter. But the cause lies deeper than that. These directors are rooted in the same self-complacency to which certain workers in the ministry and directors of plants and shops are inclined. The ministry and the main administration failed to control the progress of winter preparations and took no measures to prevent the occurrence of difficulties which are extremely hard to overcome at any time, but particularly in winter.

The "Azovstal'" Plant and the Makeyevka Plant had difficulty in unloading frozen ore. If Kogan, director of "Azovstal'", and Belobrov, director of the Makeyevka Plant, and others, had built temporary enclosures at the right time, these hardships need never have arisen. But these directors and certain others expected a mild winter, and the main administration had the same hopes. As a result, the plants had to shift hundreds of workers during the winter months to work of an emergency nature. Soviet metallurgists have shown in practice for a number of years that production can be carried on equally well in winter. That is why all workers in the industry must be on the alert for such events as happened in January and February.(1)

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At the beginning of April, a session of the bureau of the Stalino Oblast Party Committee discussed the suppression of criticism at the Novo-Makeyevka Coke Chemical Plant, the Yasinovatskiy Machine Plant, and the "Azovstal'" Plant. While different Party members in the oblast committee were found to be at fault in this, the bureau also came to the conclusion that it is impossible to retain the directors of these three plants in their positions, and two of them were given severe Party reprimands.(2)

The Kuznetsk and Magnitogorsk combines for the most part can stand as examples to other metallurgical enterprises. The experience of such leading enterprises should be disseminated more widely, but such transfer of ideas on improving operations is proceeding slowly. As an example is the fact that at "Azovstal'" and "Zaporozhstal'", the number of workers employed at one blast furnace is double that of the Kuznetsk and Magnitogorsk combines. One worker at the "Azovstal'" Plant produces much less pig iron than a worker at the Kuznetsk combine, although, technologically speaking, the two enterprises are on the same level. And "Zaporozhstal'" compares unfavorably in labor productivity to the Magnitogorsk Combine.

Workers of the metallurgical industry, in analyzing the results of the first quarter, have been undergoing criticism and self-criticism on this score, but this is not sufficient without action to eliminate their errors. Ural metallurgical workers, particularly the Stakhanovite Bolotov at the Novo-Tagil'skiy Plant and the three leading steelworkers at the Magnitogorsk Combine, have made great strides in improving operations and in saving materials, fuel, etc. The Donbass and Dnepr plants also have made such achievements. But strangely enough, the ministry did not find time to consider the innovations made by Bolotov or to appraise his methods which were initiated over 2 months ago. The present task of the ministry's workers is to establish closer relations with the enterprises. Tatarinov, chief of "Glavur-almet" (Main Administration of the Ural Metallurgical Industry), has stated that throughout the entire postwar period, workers in the technical administration of the ministry have not once visited the Ural metallurgical industry.(1)

On 19 April, the collegium of the Ministry of the Metallurgical Industry reviewed the innovations started by many metallurgical workers, including those at the Novo-Tagil'skiy Plant, the Magnitogorsk Combine, and the "Serp i molot" Plant and ordered the extensive popularization of the leading methods in all metallurgical enterprises. It must be noted, however, that the ministry was long overdue in approving and upholding these innovations, some of which date from the beginning of the year. The delay in discussing such important measures indicates the formalistic and bureaucratic relationship of the ministry to the organization and direction of socialist competition among metallurgical workers.(3)

Two other metallurgical plants have met with criticism with the report that, despite the general decline in defective production throughout enterprises of the ferrous metallurgy industry, certain plants, such as the Dnepropetrovsk and Zlatoust, have been ignoring the elementary principles of production technology, with the result that they have a large percentage of defective production. There should be an immediate and careful development of new and a review of existing standards of production.(4)

In the Urals, an interoblast conference on high-speed smelting proposed that Ural steelworkers compete to increase steel production by 1-2 tons per square meter of hearth above the existing progressive norm while effecting savings in fuel, to increase the durability of furnaces by 30 melts between repairs, and to work 1-2 days per month on saved fuel and materials.(5)

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An industry-wide economy drive was started when three Magnitogorsk steelworkers at open-hearth furnace No 3 initiated a competition to decrease production costs by better utilization of equipment, increased steel output per square meter of hearth, and strict economy in materials. They have pledged throughout 1950 to save one million rubles' worth of materials and to produce 12,000 tons of steel above plan, including 1,000 tons from saved raw materials and fuel.(6) In March, the combine's average daily production of steel was the highest ever achieved by the enterprise.(7) At the beginning of April, leading combine workers as a whole drew up the following pledge: to increase the durability of the roof of small furnaces to 210 melts as a year average, to obtain at least 10 tons of steel per square meter in the large furnaces and 7 tons in the small as a year average, to decrease fuel consumption 3 percent below the norm, and to work at least one day per month on saved fuel and materials.(8) In mid-April, the three stakhanovites each regularly obtained 10 tons of steel per square meter of hearth as compared with the norm of 7.5 tons, and the combine's workers had pledged to work 2 days per month on saved materials instead of only one.(9)

The combine's blast-furnace workers are also striving for economy. Workers at furnace No 2 have pledged to save 2,000 tons of coke, 8,000 tons of ore, 600,000 rubles' worth of other materials, and to smelt 18,200 tons of pig iron above plan, including 2,400 tons from saved materials, all during 1950.(10) Operators of furnace No 2 have achieved a coefficient of 0.776 for capacity utilization of the furnace and have decreased the consumption of coke per ton of pig iron in April by 4 kilograms over March. Operators of furnace No 6 have also made great savings in coke.(11)

The Magnitogorsk Combine, however, has been criticized for failing to meet the quota for shipments of coke to the Chusovoy Plant in Sverdlovsk Oblast, and thus is delaying the progress of record melts at the latter plant.

Yevseyev, operator of blast furnace No 1 at the Chusovoy, set a new record for blast-furnace operation by obtaining a coefficient of 0.49 for capacity utilization of the furnace. Earlier, the three shifts operating furnace No 1 had each obtained a record coefficient of 0.64. The furnace is a small one, typical of many in the Urals, and in 1949, the coefficient for its capacity utilization was always over 1.0. Yevseyev's methods include operating the furnace at an increased heat (600-650 degrees), rapid charging, and stepped-up blasts. The time for the melt was decreased to 7 hours as compared with the normal 8-10 hours. The record 0.49 coefficient has become possible for the other brigade leaders at furnace No 1, and a plant-wide dissemination of the advanced methods is being carried out.

G. P. Zabaluyev, director of the Chusovoy Plant, states that further development of high-speed methods is impossible without the normal supply of coke. The lack of coke has resulted in decreased operations of the furnaces. The editors of Komsomol'skaya pravda have reported to the Ministry of the Metallurgical Industry on the interruption of the coke supply to the plant. G. G. Vodnev, Deputy Minister, replied that the interruption in the supply is the fault of the Magnitogorsk Combine, which has not been meeting the directive from the ministry by which it must ship out daily a definite quantity of coke. Having failed to supply Chusovoy with the required amount in March, the combine is also falling behind the quota in April. The ministry telegraphed an order to the combine to meet the daily quota.(12)

On 13 April, Nosov, director of the Magnitogorsk Combine, sent a telegram to the editors of Komsomol'skaya pravda to the effect that the combine is stepping up its shipments of coke to the Chusovoy Plant and will send in the immediate future at least one trainload of coke per day to the plant.(13)

Chusovoy steelworkers are also setting records. A steelworker at open-hearth furnace No 6 completed a melt in 5 hours 5 minutes instead of 7½ hours, obtaining 15.53 tons of steel per square meter of hearth as compared with the norm of 7.5 tons.(14)

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Workers at the Novo-Tagil'skiy Metallurgical Plant have made the following pledges for 1950: to improve the coefficient for capacity utilization of the blast furnace from the 0.87 of 1949 to 0.83; to increase the production of steel per square meter of hearth from the 5.74 tons in 1949 to 6.3 tons; and to increase production of rolled metal by 3 percent above plan. In the 3 months since the pledge was made, leading blast-furnace operators have systematically obtained a coefficient of 0.8 by improving technology and forcing the melt, even under difficult winter conditions, making it possible for the blast-furnace shop as a whole to meet and exceed its pledge.

The plant's steelworkers, after an initial setback in January, due to serious technical and organizational difficulties, recovered in February and operated at a rate never before achieved in the shop. The increased work rate has been adopted in other shops too, with the result that the plant's workers could revise their original pledge upward. The blast-furnace workers are now pledging a coefficient of 0.82 and the steelworkers are pledging 7 tons per square meter for the first 4 months of 1950.(15) Bolotov, the Novo-Tagil'skiy Plant's stakhanovite, and his followers have been achieving record melts for the plant and for the Urals. Bolotov's highest record is a melt in 6 hours 15 minutes, with 12.65 tons per square meter. One of his followers recently topped this with a melt in 6 hours 35 minutes and a production of 15.3 tons per square meter.(16) On another day, this worker completed a melt in 6 hours 20 minutes, obtaining 13.999 tons of high-grade steel per square meter. Both are new records for the Urals.(17)

A steelworker at the Nizhnyaya Salda Plant, oldest in the Urals, recently set a new record for steel production at the plant with the completion of a melt in 7 hours 50 minutes and a production of 9.3 tons per square meter of hearth, as compared with the planned 5 tons.(18) At the Kushva Metallurgical Plant, a worker recently completed a melt in 6 hours 50 minutes as compared with 11 hours 30 minutes and obtained 11.4 tons of high-grade steel per square meter of furnace hearth.(19)

A leading rolling-mill brigade at the Alapayevsk Metallurgical Plant has established a record in rolling dynamo iron, rolling 3,240 sheets per shift instead of the norm of 1,600.(20)

The "600" Rolling Mill at the Zlatoust Metallurgical Plant has been in operation 25 years and during that time its productivity has increased several times. The mill is now rolling high-grade steel instead of iron and low-carbon steels. The labor-consuming processes in operating the mill have been mechanized both before and since the war.(21)

In the Udmurt ASSR, the current goal for record steel production is set at 9 tons per square meter of furnace hearth, a goal pledged by a leading worker in honor of May Day.(22)

In the South, steelworkers of open-hearth furnace No 3, shop No 1 of the Taganrog Metallurgical Plant imeni Andreyev, Rostov Oblast, have answered the Magnitogorsk appeal by a pledge to produce 1,200 tons of steel each above plan during 1950, including 400 tons from saved materials.(23)

The Metallurgical Plant imeni Dzerzhinskiy in Dneprodzerzhinsk completed the March plan for the entire metallurgical cycle on schedule. Leading blast-furnace workers obtained a coefficient of 0.83 for capacity utilization of the furnace as compared with 0.84.(24) A recent steel-producing record achieved at the plant was 10 tons per square meter, 3 tons above the norm.(25)

Following the appeal of the Magnitogorsk workers, steelworkers in open-hearth shop No 3 of the Plant imeni Petrovskiy, Dnepropetrovsk, have pledged to produce 6,000 tons of steel above plan in 1950, including 500 tons with saved raw materials, and to save 500,000 rubles.(26) In 1949, the plant's

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open-hearth shop No 3 considerably increased production over 1948 and substantially exceeded the prewar level. The shop's record for production this year is 10.5 tons of steel per square meter of hearth as compared with the planned 6 tons. The shop could have much higher achievements except for serious shortcomings in the organization of labor and for technological difficulties. The plant administration and the Ministry of the Metallurgical Industry have not been able to eliminate these drawbacks now for several years.

The shop has large-capacity furnaces and the weight of the melts could be increased as much as 10-15 percent. To achieve this increase, the various-sized pouring ladles should be removed and 120-ton ladles installed. There should also be installed a second 175-ton crane for pouring steel in the casting wing. The plant's directors and Kuz'min, Minister of the Metallurgical Industry, who visited the shop in 1949, were convinced of the necessity of these measures, but nothing has since been done about them.

The increase in high-speed steel smelting is being hampered by the present method of pouring steel in a stationary casting pit. As much as 20-30 percent of completed high-speed melts must be held in the furnaces because the casting pit is not ready for them. The casting molds and the hot ingots are kept in the casting wing, and they block up the shop to such an extent that it has become impossible to work in the casting area. For 3 years, the shop's directors have been insisting that the plant directors transfer the steel-pouring process to cars and install a mobile casting pit for the shop's casting wing. The directors are still delaying in carrying out the plan, although it is entirely possible to put it into effect.

The use of the chromomagnesite roofs should have increased the productivity of the furnaces and increased the run between repairs to 400 melts. Both of the shop's furnaces are equipped with this type of roof, but the workers have not been able to obtain such high durability. In the fourth quarter 1949, one of the furnaces was run for 215 melts after which cold repairs were begun on it. The other furnace in the first quarter 1950 was run for only 172 melts before cold repair was started. During both these runs, roof repairs not provided in the plan had to be done on the furnaces, with the resultant loss of nearly 2,000 tons of steel.

The plant's refractory shop has been supplying very poor quality chromomagnesite brick. Before allowing this brick to be used, the directors should have taken steps to improve its quality and to have refused to accept the poor-quality brick which the furnaces have had to use for a long period of time.

The shop has always had a shortage of casting molds. The foundry shop produces molds of such poor quality that they will last only for 3-5 melts instead of 40-50. The directors should not have to wait orders from the ministry in order to rectify this situation.

Another factor which restricts the development of high-speed smelting is the lack of scientific and technical assistance to the workers from plant engineers and workers in institutes, none of whom make regular visits. In addition to the progressive bonus system of wages, there should be additional encouragement for high-speed work methods.(27)

On the credit side, the shop has developed a method of using blast-furnace dust containing from 50 to 60 percent iron instead of iron ore. Formerly, blast furnace dust had been relegated to waste.(28)

In Stalino Oblast, steelworkers of the "Azovstal'" Plant have started a drive for the completion of one melt above plan every 10 days in each furnace in the open-hearth shop and thereby to increase considerably the production of metal in the operating furnaces. The operators of furnace No 6, the large

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tilting furnace, have been leading the drive and on 10 April completed their 16th above-plan melt, weighing 431 tons.(29) Workers at the plant's blast furnace No 3 have achieved a coefficient of 0.89 for capacity utilization of the furnace as compared with the norm of 1.08.

The Yenakiyevo and Konstantinovka metallurgical plants in Stalino Oblast completed the March plan ahead of schedule, producing steel, pig iron, and rolled products above the plan. Leading workers at Yenakiyevo blast furnace No 1 have achieved a coefficient of 0.83 as compared with the planned 1.0.(30)

In 1949, the "Zaporozhstal'" Plant completed the plan for the entire metallurgical cycle, improved the coefficients for utilization of equipment, and exceeded the profit plan. In 1950, the plant plans to decrease the loss of blast-furnace gas by more than 5 percent, thereby saving approximately 5 million rubles, and to cut the loss of coke gas by 2 percent. Losses from defective production in 1949 constituted 2.8 percent of the cost of all plant production. The plant has also set up new norms which will be adopted in 1950. The coefficient for utilization of blast-furnace capacity will be improved by 1.3 percent over 1949, production of steel per square meter of hearth area will be increased 4.8 percent, thin-sheet mill workers will increase the productivity of the mill per hot hour by 21.3 percent, and operators of the "Tandem" Mill will increase its productivity by 10.8 percent. Productivity of labor will be increased by 24 percent, which will mean that the prewar labor-productivity level will be exceeded this year by 42.5 percent.(31)

At the beginning of April, leading steel workers at "Zaporozhstal'" made the following pledges for 1950 in answer to the appeal of the "Serp i molot" workers: to increase the durability of the open-hearth furnace roofs made of Dinas brick to 200 melts between repairs as compared with the norm of 180; to achieve a production of 6 tons of steel per square meter of hearth as compared with the planned 5.03 tons; and to decrease fuel consumption to 190 kilograms per ton of smelted steel.(32) At the open-hearth shop's furnace No 1, which has a chromomagnesite roof, leading workers have each been obtaining 8-9 tons of steel per square meter of hearth.(33) Operators of the plant's large slabbing mill have exceeded the highest prewar hourly productivity record.(34)

In recent months, metallurgists of the Dnepr and Donbass regions have complained to the "Krivbassruda" (Krivoy Rog Iron Ore Basin) Trust of the low quality of the ore, saying that it was full of dust and variable in iron content. The metallurgical enterprises have been obtaining less high-grade ore than ordered, while the supply of low-grade ore has been exceeding the planned norms. For 10 days of April, the trust failed to meet the plan for ore quality, with the iron content 0.12 percent below the norm and the hardness and size requirements 1.5 percent below the norm. This situation is due to the fact that many mines have not been meeting the technical standards for mining, and many directors have sanctioned the shipment of ore with a high content of fines in order to overcome the lag in mining plans. Because the fines are lighter weight and easier to ship and handle, the medium-hard and hard ores are being left till later. Since the beginning of 1950, the mines of the Krivbass have not been meeting production plans. Kudryashov, director of the trust, and Shil'man, chief engineer, have been sharply criticized by the Krivoy Rog City Party Committee for failure to put into effect proposals for adopting advanced mining methods. For example, more than a year has passed since a driller at the Mine imeni K. Libknekht made significant strides in advancing the technology of mining by using a heavy-duty hammer drill and scraper winches. The method increased labor productivity 100-150 percent and almost cut in half the expenditure for blasting materials, electric power, and compressed air. One brigade operating on the new method last year mined 60,000 tons of ore above plan. Since then, however, the decision to popularize the method throughout the basin has not been fulfilled, and only a few miners have adopted it.

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The plan for complete mechanization of the four largest mines in the basin has fallen through and the lack of spare parts has led to a high incidence of machine idleness throughout the area. The "Kommunist" Plant in Krivoy Rog, the mines' equipment base, has not yet started series output of the equipment needed for new methods of mining and for expansion of mechanized mining in the basin.(35)

A new record in steel smelting has been set at the Stalingrad "Krasnyy Oktyabr'" Plant. Leading workers have completed melts in 4 hours 50 minutes and recovered 13 tons of steel per square meter of hearth. This is the highest productivity yet recorded at the plant.(33)

Another drive for economy and better use of equipment has started in Moscow. Rolling-shop equipment in metallurgical plants undergoes capital repair twice a year, with auxiliary shops doing the repair work. The long time consumed in repairs decreases the output of rolled products and expends much materials, time, etc. Mechanics of the section-rolling shop of the "Serp i molot" Plant have hit upon an innovation in repairing equipment which results in the minimum amount of capital repair jobs. The additional output of rolled metal resulting from this innovation is estimated as follows: the "750" mill will roll an additional 3,500 tons, the "450" mill, 1,500 tons; the "300" mill, 150 tons; and the "250" mill, 300 tons additional.(36) This will help to increase output of rolled metal for the shop by 6,000 tons above plan per year.(37) At the same time, these mechanics have successfully completed cleaning operations on rolling mills, without interrupting their operation for long periods, by doing the repairs on off days when the mill would not be in operation. Workers in auxiliary shops did not have to be called in for this type of repair, thereby saving considerably in repair expenditures. Whereas in the first quarter 1949, the idleness of the four mills for repairs by mechanics, electricians, etc., amounted to 26 hours 35 minutes, in 3 months of 1950, this idleness has been reduced to 5 hours 5 minutes.(36) Formerly, the work of installing the fourth stand of the "450" mill could be done only on those days set aside for major repairs when the mills lay idle for 2-3 days. The mechanics have completed this work without stopping the mill and have installed the stand in one third the usual time.(38)

At present, it has been decided to do away completely with the practice of halting the operations of rolling mills for capital repair. Rebuilding of the equipment will be done on separate units of each mill on off days. A detailed yearly repair schedule has been drawn up for this purpose. Advanced technology has also been of great significance in improving repair work. It has been decided to use high-frequency current in tempering the surface of major parts and units and to start using the electric-spark method of hardening tools. Additional machines and installations will be put into operation in the shop, including semiautomatic stop devices on shears, machines for hoisting ingots of hollow drill steel onto machine tools, and others.(36)

A drive is on at the Moscow "Elektrostal'" Plant to recover alloys from waste slags. During the first 6 days of April, in the first steel-smelting shop nearly 3,000 kilograms of ferroalloys were recovered from slags, enough to complete one melt. Another economy measure adopted in the plant is the plan for using the minimum quantity of ferroalloys in each melt. At only one furnace, one ton of alloys was saved during the first half of April. Some workers have made considerable savings in ferrotungsten.(39) The shop's electric furnace No 4 smelts a heat-resistant steel. The shop's workers have pledged to complete four melts per month on saved ferroalloys.(40)

The Hard Alloys Combine in Moscow is also striving to effect savings in equipment and material. One of the foremen in the sintering division has pledged to increase the durability of the molybdenum furnaces from 30 to 37 days between repairs and to save 25 percent on graphite boats. His shift will work one week per month without obtaining a graphite boat from the

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warehouse. The mixing division has pledged to increase the service of the grinding machines between repairs to 2 months instead of one. The savings on repairs will release considerable numbers of workers in the machine shop for other work.(36) In honor of May Day, the combine's workers have pledged to increase the durability of the tungsten-titanium alloys, to reduce defective production by one percent, and to fulfill by 110 percent the April plan for production of the new high-quality alloy for high-speed cast-iron cutting.(41)

In Gor'kiy Oblast, a leading steelworker at the Kulebaki Metallurgical Plant imeni Kirov produced 8 tons of steel per square meter of open-hearth furnace hearth as compared with the norm of 4 tons and completed a melt in 6 hours 5 minutes.(42) Steelworkers at open-hearth furnace No 4 in the old open-hearth shop of the Vyksa Metallurgical Plant, also in Gor'kiy Oblast, recently completed a full-weight melt in 5 hours 55 minutes, 40 minutes faster than the plan. Workers in the old-pipe and the sheet-rolling shops completed the first-quarter plan ahead of schedule and have been producing in excess of the daily plans.(43)

In Kemerovo Oblast, on 1 April the Kuznetsk Metallurgical Combine imeni Stalin completed the March plan and the first-quarter production plan for the entire metallurgical cycle, including coke. All the mines have considerably exceeded the iron-mining plan. In March, blast-furnace workers obtained an average coefficient of 0.87 for the shop as a whole as compared with the planned 0.9, and at furnace No 1, a coefficient of 0.81 was obtained.(43) In March, the open-hearth shop workers obtained 7 tons of steel per square meter of hearth as compared with the norm of 6.83 tons. Workers in the rail mill shop exceeded the March Plan 6.5 percent.(45)

In the Latvian SSR, workers of the draw shop of the Liiyepaya "Krasnyy metallurg" Plant have pledged to produce 55 percent more wire this year than last, using the same amount of equipment and manpower.(46) The plant failed to meet the first-quarter 1950 plan for production of rolled metal and wire rods.(47)

One year ago, the Leningrad Rolled Steel, Wire, and Cable Plant imeni Molotov made a concerted drive to improve production processes, and has had outstanding results. Defective production has decreased from 0.7 in the second quarter 1949 to 0.4 percent in the fourth quarter and to 0.26 percent in February 1950. The plant is now using precision instruments and microscopes in testing the wire-drawing tools, whereas a year ago, this process was done by the most primitive methods. The plant's workers were also successful in creating new and originally designed instruments which are used to control the quality of the wire as it is being drawn. Leningrad institutes, design bureaus, and Professor Mikheyev of the Ural Affiliate of the Academy of Sciences USSR were of great assistance in the development of these instruments, the principle of which is founded on the electromagnetic properties of the metal. The instruments are now in production.(45) On 20 April, M. A. Sorokin, deputy chairman of the Executive Committee of the Leningrad City Soviet, awarded orders and medals of the USSR to workers of the Plant imeni Molotov for their years of service and excellent work in the metallurgical industry.(48)

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